

# Chairperson's Report 22/23

Good evening. You are all welcome to our 2023, slightly delayed AGM.

2022-23 with Autism Families was quite an eye opener for most of our committee this year due largely to the fact that the members who dealt with the day to day administrative aspects of the group stepped down at our last AGM, leaving the rest of us who were mostly "hands on" people and some new members to have to learn very quickly how things were done. This certainly wasn't easy and there've been many bumps in the road and bumping of heads but most of us are still here with the full intention of seeing Autism Families continue as a successful local charity. And I would like to thank the committee and volunteers for all their hard work during the last 13 or 14 months since our last AGM.

I'd also like to thank our other committee members, Matthew, Marianne, Lorraine, Jolene and Sharon, who stepped down during the year for their hard work and commitment also. In particular Sharon or Shazza, our thoughts are with her and her ongoing health issue and we look forward to a full recovery and to see her back with us once again soon.

During the year we ran our monthly kids club in the Brain Injury Foundation in Camlough. Each month we'd bring in some outside entertainment, such as drumming, animals, dancing, visits from the PSNI and the Fire Service, among others and these were always well attended at each club. There were other months where we created our own entertainment such as arts and crafts and gaming and these were also successful clubs. Our Halloween, Easter and Christmas parties were huge successes and we created our own Santa's grotto last year which was a big hit. It's has also been turned into a temporary sensory room which is an ongoing project.

In January we had another visit to the Grand Opera House in Belfast to see a relaxed viewing of the Panto Cinderella which was a huge hit. 2023 saw another successful summer scheme which included a trip to Dublin Zoo, Seaford Butterfly House, Streamvale Farm and Emerald Park to name a few.

Regular Sunday morning relaxed Cinema viewings and also Bowling for the Over 10's once again proved very popular and we are currently in the midst of a six week Cookery program for our over 10's which is enjoyed immensely by both parents and kids.

I'd like once again to extend our gratitude to "The Brain Injury Foundation" for allowing us the use of their excellent premises in Camlough, without which would not be enjoying the success we currently have so a huge thank you to them and long may this last.

Also huge thanks again to our committee for the last twelve months and in particular a huge debt of gratitude to our treasurer Rita, who is stepping down due to work commitments after many years with our group, but she won't be too far away if ever we need any financial advice of course. Mates rates apparently she says.

Going forward into 2024 I've no doubt we will have continued success and hope to enlarge our committee as there's one or two ideas in the early stages which may come into fruition

soon enough so thank you for allowing me this last year as Chair which has been a very very rewarding experience.